



**Candy counters:** Bernice Swiecichowski and her son Eugene sort through penny candy in large jars

at Bernice's Bar and Grocery in Shawano County's Hofa Park.



# Hard work at heart of community

By Gary Dodge

Press-Gazette

**HOFA PARK** — Life in this Shawano County community revolves around farming, church and Friday night seafood dinners, area residents say.

The biggest event in the southeastern Shawano County community is the St. Stanislaus Catholic Church picnic. It attracts about 800 people from throughout the area every summer.

**Press-Gazette photos by Ken Wesely**

The picnic started more than 100 years ago. For the past 25 years, Anna Tyczkowski, 80, Route 3, Pulaski, has served thousands of chicken dinners there. She plans to be the head cook again at the June 16 picnic.

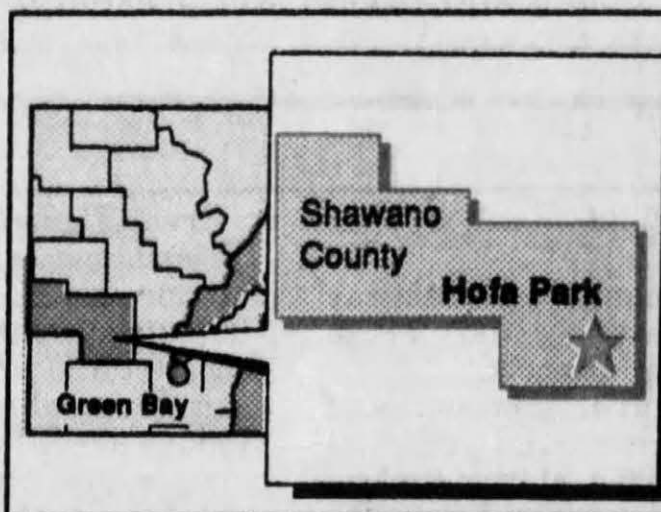
Tyczkowski's reputation as a cook goes beyond the picnics. She also prepares parish breakfasts, but quit providing 700 to 800 dinners at weddings three years ago.

She and her late husband, Louis, started a 100-acre farm 58 years ago on South Chestnut Road, Tyczkowski said. She now rents land.

Winter Masses at St. Stanislaus, Route 2, Seymour, are at 8 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. Sunday — after farm chores, said the Rev. Mark Szych, 62. In summer, Sunday's service starts at 9 a.m. The parish has 465 members from throughout the area.

He said his parishioners are "hard-working, industrious farmers" who have a "tradition of being good farmers."

Church members raised money for a



## The Hofa Park file

□ **Population:** About 125 people live within a one-mile radius of Hofa Park, estimates Randall Holewinski, town of Maple Grove Board member.

□ **Founder:** Jon J. Hof failed to settle Norwegians in the area but he succeeded in settling 1,000 Polish immigrant families in the Hofa Park, Pulaski, Sobieski, Kisciuisko and Krakow area. Hof was an agent for the General Land Office of Milwaukee in 1875.

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new parish center. There's only a \$5,000 debt left, Szych said.

"That's a credit to the people," he said.

Besides farming, some families provide welding, upholstery, and tractor and automobile repair services.

Most children attend the Pulaski School District, but some go to Seymour and Bonduel schools, Szych said.

Residents try to mix hard work with fun.

People gather at Bernice's Bar and Grocery, Route 2, Seymour, for perch, shrimp and frog leg dinners on Friday nights.

Bernice Swiecichowski, 72, said she started the business about 50 years ago. It serves 60 to 70 people every Friday.

The business does not advertise. It depends on word of mouth.

The bar also sponsors a pool team that won first place in a local tournament the last four or five years, said her son, Eugene Swiecichowski, 44.

The other area bar is Luci's, owned by Lucille Van Lannen, Route 2, Seymour.

Hofa Park once had two other taverns and a cheese factory.

The community's baseball team competes in the Dairyland League.

The activities and gatherings keep neighbors close. They help each other during hard times, said Fred Gorecki, 75, who lives on Lessor-Maple Grove Road.

Ed Holewinski, 79, who has lived on his four-generation farm on County C all his life, said he stayed in the area "to carry on family traditions."

"Why move around all the time?" Frances Gorecki, 68, said when asked why she and husband Fred settled in Hofa Park.

■ **Next week:** Walhain in Kewaunee County



**Religious Influence:** The Rev. Mark Szych, pastor of St. Stanislaus Catholic Church, stands outside the church in Hofa Park.



**Keeping the faith:** Anna Tyczkowski of Hofa Park lights a religious candle in her kitchen where she keeps many other religious articles.